



Testimony of Chris Phelps, State Director, Environment Connecticut  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee

February 10, 2021

**RE: Supporting SB 837 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF PERFLUOROALKYL OR POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES IN CLASS B FIREFIGHTING FOAM**

Environment Connecticut is a nonprofit, nonpartisan environmental advocacy organization. Together with our colleagues at Environment America and state environment groups across the country, we advocate for clean air, clean water, clean energy, open spaces, and a safe climate.

SB 837 would ban use of PFAS fire fighting foam for training purposes as of 7/1/2022, create a program to take back existing stocks of such foam, and ban additional uses of such foam as of 7/3/2023. Environment Connecticut supports this legislation. However, we respectfully suggest amending it to achieve the following:

1. Make the prohibition on use of PFAS fire fighting foam for training purposes effective upon passage.
2. Clarify that the ban on use of PFAS fire fighting foam includes *all uses* of such foam not preempted by federal law and that such ban be effective no later than 7/1/2022.

PFAS are a class of thousands of chemicals used in many products, not just fire fighting foam. As the members of this committee should be well aware, these chemicals are known as “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down in our bodies or the environment. As more PFAS are produced, used in products, and released, they are accumulating at greater levels in our environment and our bodies.

The growing environmental and health threat from PFAS is significant. They are linked to health risks from liver damage to birth defects and cancers. Because they don’t break down over time, the risk they pose only increases as more are emitted into our environment.

In 2019, a massive spill of PFAS fire fighting foam at Bradley airport contaminated the Farmington River and brought the attention of local officials, legislators, and the public to the threat posed by these chemicals. Ironically, that spill came just weeks after another legislative committee failed to act on legislation that would have begun the process of phasing out this unnecessary and dangerous product in our state. Now, two years later, it is well past time for the legislature to begin taking action to get PFAS out of products sold and used in Connecticut. SB 837 is an overdue step towards protecting Connecticut's environment and its people from these dangerous "forever" chemicals.

On behalf of Environment Connecticut's statewide membership, I urge you to act swiftly to approve SB 837, with amendments that strengthen and accelerate its implementation.

Sincerely,

Chris Phelps  
State Director, Environment Connecticut